DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 388 775 CE 070 156

AUTHOR Gordon, Howard R. D.
TITLE Participation of VICA Members in Personal Development Activities.
PUB DATE 95
NOTE 16p.; For a related paper on assessment of personal development activities, see ED 386 602.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Citizen Participation; Cooperation; *Individual Development; Leadership; Postsecondary Education; Secondary Education; Self Esteem; Self Evaluation (Individuals); State Surveys; Student Attitudes; *Student Organizations; *Student Participation; Student Surveys; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *Vocational Industrial Clubs of America; *West Virginia

ABSTRACT

A study examined the extent to which 1994-95 members of the West Virginia chapter of Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA) participated in VICA personal development activities. The study population consisted of all VICA members in West Virginia, and the study sample consisted of all 156 VICA members who attended the annual West Virginia VICA state conference. The three-part data collection instrument consisted of the following: questions related to biographical information; 24 personal development skill statements organized into 4 measurement scales (leadership, cooperation, self-confidence, and citizenship) adapted from the Personal Development Inventory; and questions measuring level of participation in VICA activities. Of the four personal development inventory scales, citizenship and cooperation received the highest mean scores (6.30 and 5.58, respectively), and leadership received the lowest mean score (4.21). Low positive relationships were discovered between participation in teamwork skills activities and self-rating on the cooperation scale, between participation in decision-making skills activities and self-rating on the leadership scale, and between participation in local VICA competitions and self-rating on the citizenship scale (.30, .30, and .23, respectively). Negligible (.03 to .15) positive relationships were found for all activities corresponding to the self-confidence scale. (Contains 23 references.) (MN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 388 775

Participation of VICA Members in Personal Development Activities

Howard R.D. Gordon
Professor of Occupational Leadership
Marshall University
Department of Adult and Technical Education
434 Harris Hall
Huntington, WV 25755
(304) 696-3079

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

H R D Gordon

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Running Head: VICA PARTICIPATION

CE070156

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which 1994-95 VICA members in West Virginia participated in VICA personal development activities. The population consisted of all VICA members in West Virginia. The sample consisted of all one hundred and fifty-six (N=156) VICA members who attended the Annual West Virginia VICA State Conference. The major instrument used to collect data was the Personal Development Inventory. The four measurement scales (Leadership, Self confidence, Cooperation, Citizenship) yielded Cronbach's coefficient alphas ranging from .72 to .80. Descriptive statistics including correlations coefficients were utilized in this study. VICA members perceived themselves as having a higher level of personal development skills for the following scales: citizenship, cooperation, and self confidence. Respondents' level of personal development skills increased as their participation in VICA activities increased.

Participation of VICA Members in Personal Development Activities

When vocational students step from the classroom to such a volatile work environment, they must be armed with far more than occupation-specific skills. They must have the skills needed to adapt to change, to enlist cooperation, to be flexible, and to take on new assignments. While companies continue to demand occupational skills, they now also require workers with both followership and leadership skills.

Students who participate in vocational student organization (VSO) leadership activities are more likely to possess desirable employee traits: adaptability, enterprise enthusiasm, independence, objectivity, originality, personal integrity, persistence, resourcefulness, self-confidence, tact, and tolerance of stress (Koeninger, 1988). Among the evidence confirming this correlation is Miller's (1989) survey of Future Business Leaders of America students' employers.

One way that personal development skills are developed is through VSOs such as the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA). According to the VICA Leadership Handbook (1989), VICA's basic premise is the development of student leadership skills, industrial and technical skills, citizenship, character, and the promotion of dignity of work. VICA's motto is, "preparing for leadership in the world of work."

A review of the literature revealed no studies that examined personal development skills through secondary VICA. A small number of studies were reported (Peterson, 1984; Smith, Stewart, & Mihalvich, 1984; and Babb, 1988), that dealt with secondary VICA in the form of comparisons with other vocational student organizations.

Theoretical Framework

Theories and models are useful in defining educational leadership problems and in turn may improve the prediction, development, and application of leadership (Bass, 1990). Two theories that may prove useful in understanding and analyzing VICA are personal-situational theory and interaction and social learning theory. Both theories involve a behavior element in an individual (Bass, 1960), and a reinforcement element (Sheridan, Kerr & Abelson, 1982).

The personal-situational theory is based on an argument that theories of leaders cannot be constructed for behavior in a vacuum. They must contain elements about the person as well as elements about the situation (Bass, 1990). A person, regardless of background or origin, can learn to become a leader through different exposures and participation in leadership activities (Gordon, 1995; Kouzes & Posner, 1990). The VICA Leadership Handbook (1989) stated that one major purpose of the organization is "to develop leadership abilities through participation in educational, vocational, civic recreational, and social activities." Thus the personal-situational theory is applicable to VICA because both the organization and the theory share the elements of personal and situational attributes (Mativo, 1993).

A second theory known as the interaction and social learning theory explains the leader-follower relationship as a consequence of a leader's interaction with followers, as well as with circumstances involved (Bass, 1990). Key elements of this theory are individual-interaction and assumption of learning through social activities. The leader shows the follower the behaviors through which rewards may be obtained (House, 1971).

The personal-situation and interaction and learning theories assume that by repeated involvement in activities and by interaction in a learning atmosphere to solve problems or generate

ideas, an individual will acquire leadership skills and emerge as a leader (Mativo, 1993).

Models illustrate the relationship variables that contribute to leadership. One leadership model is the multiple-linkage model by Yukl (1970, 1971, 1989). This model suggests that the degree of involvement in an organization will eventually lead to a positive or negative relationship.

Since its inception in 1965 (Vaughn, et al., 1987), VICA has claimed to develop the personal development skills of students enrolled in technical, trade and industrial, and health occupations education. However, there is insufficient data to substantiate that claim.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which 1994-95 VICA members in West Virginia participated in VICA personal development activities. Specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Describe VICA members by their years in VICA, ethnicity, and gender.
2. Describe the extent to which VICA members perceive they have developed personal development skills.
3. Describe the level of participation of VICA members in specific VICA activities.
4. Determine the relationship between participation in specific VICA activities and personal development skills.

Limitations of the Study

Any conclusions drawn from this study are limited to the individuals attending the conference.

Procedures

Population and Sample

The population for the study consisted of all VICA members in West Virginia. However, for the purpose of this study, a non-probability sample was utilized. The sample consisted of all one hundred and fifty-six (N=156) VICA members who attended the Annual West Virginia VICA State Conference (March of 1995). Oliver (1981) pointed out that there are situations in vocational education research where it is difficult to select random samples. According to Oliver (1981) the researcher may face the necessity of using existing groups such as classes of students in a school or schools, participants at a conference or workshop, and teachers in a specialized option. Statistical inferences cannot, therefore, be made to the populations concerned.

Instrumentation

A three-part questionnaire was used to collect data from the subjects. The first part included questions related to biographical information. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of twenty-four (24) personal development skill statements (four measurement scales) adapted from the Personal Development Inventory (PDI) developed at Iowa State University (Carter, 1989). Responses were coded using a seven point Likert-type scale with the following choices:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Slightly Disagree
4 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree
5 = Slightly Agree

6 = Agree
7 = Strongly Agree

Part three of the questionnaire measured VICA club members' level of participation in VICA activities. This section consisted of thirteen (13) statements. A four point Likert-type scale was used to measure responses. The following values were used:

1 = Not Active
2 = Slightly Active
3 = Moderately Active
4 = Very Active

Content validity of the instrument was established by an advisory committee consisting of West Virginia State Department of Education personnel, and a regional teacher educator of West Virginia Institute of Technology.

Eight VICA members not in the sample were used to pilot test the instrument to determine its face validity and assess internal reliability. The four measurement scales (Leadership, Self confidence, Cooperation, Citizenship) yielded Cronbach's coefficient alphas ranging from .72 to .80 in this study as compared to .73 to .78 by Carter (1989).

Data Collection

Questionnaires were delivered to facilitators at the Annual West Virginia VICA State Conference which was held at Cedar Lakes in Ripley, West Virginia (March of 1995). Directions for administering the instrument to VICA members were provided to the facilitators.

Analysis of Data

Data were analyzed using programs provided by the SPSS/PC+, Version 4.0 (Norusis/SPSS, Inc. 1990). Descriptive statistics were utilized in this study. The following standards as presented by Best (1981, p. 255) were used to interpret the correlations coefficients:

.00 to .20 negligible
.20 to .40 low
.40 to .60 moderate
.60 to .80 substantial
.80 to 1.00 high to very high

Results

Objective One

Years in the VICA ranged from one to three with a mode of one, median of one, and mean of 1.40 (SD .61) years. Of the 156 VICA members, 150 (96.2%) were Anglo, 6 (3.8%) were from a minority group (including one Native American, two Hispanics, and three of "other" ethnic origin), 111 (71.2%) were female, and 45 (28.8%) were male.

Objective Two

Participants were asked to rate their feelings toward the 24 personal development skill statements. Table 1 contains descriptive data for each of the measurement scales. All scales had means of 4.21 or greater. The personal development inventory scales which received the highest mean scores included: citizenship (6.30), and cooperation (5.58). The leadership scale yielded the lowest mean score (4.21).

Insert Table 1 about here

Objective Three

VICA members were asked to describe their level of participation in each of the thirteen (13) VICA activities (see Table 2). Mean scores ranged from 2.42 to 3.33. Respondents indicated that they had participated "moderately active" in over fifty percent (53.84%) of the activities.

Insert Table 2 about here

Objective Four

Correlation coefficients were computed to measure the association between participation in specific VICA activities and personal development skills. Correlation coefficients ranged from .03 to .30 (negligible to low, and positive).

A low (.30), positive relationship existed between participation in teamwork skills and the cooperation scale. A similar finding (.30) was revealed for decision making activities and the leadership scale. Local competitions had a low (.23), positive relationship for the citizenship scale. Negligible (.03 to .15) and positive relationships existed for all the activities corresponding to the self confidence scale.

Discussion and Conclusions

Minorities were under represented in this study. Biographical data in this study suggest the following: a "typical" VICA member is white, is a female, and has membership in VICA for less than two years.

The leadership measurement scale was rated the lowest of the four scales by respondents. This suggests that VICA members perceived themselves as having achieved less than optimum levels of leadership skills. Using the PDI instrument, Boyd, Herring, and Briers (1992) reported a similar finding in which the leadership scale yielded the lowest mean score for 4-H club members.

VICA members perceived themselves as having a higher level of personal development skills for the following scales: citizenship, cooperation, and self confidence. These three scales may appear to be the cadre of the personal development skills which exists in vocational student organizations such as VICA.

Specific activities perceived by VICA members as having made the greatest contribution to personal development skills included teamwork skills, local competitions, state competitions, fund raising, chapter meetings, decision making, and social activities. These findings support the multiple-linkage model by Yukl (1970, 1971, 1989). The implication of this model is that the more different ways that one gets involved the better the learning experience.

The association between participation in specific VICA activities and personal development skills revealed negligible-to-low positive relationships. Respondents' level of personal development skills increased as their participation in VICA activities increased. The respondents' perceptions of VICA's contribution to development of personal development skills tends to support both the personal-situational theory (Wofford, 1981) and the interaction and

social learning theory (Bass, 1990).

Recommendations

The State Department of Education and school districts should work together to address the following recommendations:

1. To increase minority participation rates among students, more active recruitment of minority students with secondary schools should be conducted.

2. Chapter Advisors of the West Virginia VICA program should find ways to increase the leadership skills of VICA members. This may be beneficial for developing the self confidence of VICA members.

3. Active participation in the VICA Professional Development Program should be encouraged. This will ensure that VICA members make a smooth transition from school to the work force.

Further Research

4. The study should be replicated in other states to determine whether the perceived importance of developing personal development skills by secondary VICA members as found in this study are similar.

5. A qualitative analysis should be undertaken to understand student perceptions of participating in Vocational Student Organizations and acquisition of personal development skills from the organization.

References

Babb, M.G. (1988). Determining the usefulness of leadership training to the state officers of six vocational student organizations in Georgia. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Georgia, Athens.

Bass, B.M. (1960). Leadership, psychology, and organizational behavior. New York: Harper.

Bass, B.M. (1990). Bass & Stogdill's handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications. New York: Free Press.

Best, J.W. (1981). Research in education. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Boyd, B.L., Herring, D.R., & Briers, G.E. (1992). Developing life skills in youth. Journal of Extension, 30, 16-18.

Carter, R.I. (1989). Personal development inventory. Ames: Iowa State University.

Gordon, H.R.D. (1995, March). An assessment of the leadership skills of college of education students at Marshall University. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association, Hilton Head, S.C. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 378 922.)

House, R.J. (1971). A path goal theory of leader effectiveness. Administrative Science Quarterly, 16, 321-338.

Koeninger, J.G. (1988). Value added vocational classrooms. Vocational Education Journal, 63, 38-41.

Kouzes, J.M., & Posner, B.Z. (1990). The leadership challenge. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Mativo, J.M. (1993). Perception of leadership skills: Relationships to postsecondary Vocational Industrial Clubs of America participation in Georgia (Doctoral dissertation, University of Georgia, 1993). Dissertation Abstracts International, 54, 2128.

Miller, E.D. (1988). VSO experience pays off. Vocational Education Journal, 63, 39.

Norusis, M.J./SPSS Inc. (1990). SPSS/PC+4.0 base manual for the IBM PC/XT/AT and PS/2. Chicago, IL: SPSS Inc.

Oliver, D.J. (1981). Statistical problems in agricultural education research. Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Department of Agricultural Education.

Peterson, J.W. (1984). The usefulness of leadership training to state officers of vocational student organizations in Michigan. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Sheridan, J.E., Kerr, J.L., & Abelson, M.A. (1982). Leadership activation theory: An opponent process model of subordinate responses to leader behavior. In J.G. Hunt, V. Sekarian, & C.A. Schriesheim (Eds.), Leadership: Beyond establishment views. Carbondale, IL; Southern Illinois University Press.

Smith, C.L., Stewart, B.R., & Mihalevich, J.R. (1984). A study of the congruency between the interests and concerns of student participants and the goals, objectives, and activities of vocational student organizations. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri.

Vaughn, P.R., Vaughn, R.C., & Vaughn, D.L. (1987). Handbook for advisors of vocational student organizations. Athens, GA: AAVIM.

Vocational Industrial Clubs of America, (1989). VICA leadership handbook. Leesburg, VA.

Wofford, J.C. (1981). An integrative theory of leadership. Paper, Academy of Management, San Diego, CA.

Yukl, G.A. (1970). Leader LPC scores: Attitude dimensions and behavioral correlates. Journal of Social Psychology, 80, 207-212.

Yukl, G.A. (1971). Toward a behavioral theory of leadership. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 6, 414-440.

Yukl, G.A. (1989). Leadership in organizations. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Table 1.

Means and Standard Deviations of the Perceived Level of Personal Development Skills of Respondents (N = 156)

Scale	M[a]	SD
Citizenship	6.30	.58
Cooperation	5.58	.43
Self confidence	5.27	.57
Leadership	4.21	.55

[a]Scale values: strongly disagree = 1; disagree = 2; slightly disagree = 3; neither agree nor disagree = 4; slightly agree = 5; agree = 6; and strongly agree = 7.

Table 2.

Means and Standard Deviations for Participation in Selected VICA Activities (N = 156)

Activity	M[a]	SD
Teamwork skills	3.33	.91
Local competitions	3.22	.95
State competitions	3.20	.95
Fund raising	3.18	.98
Chapter meetings	3.17	1.00
Decision making	3.13	.98
Social activities	3.04	1.02
Community service	2.92	1.03
Parliamentary procedure	2.76	1.13
Public relations	2.64	1.08
Public speaking	2.61	1.13
Job site visits	2.51	1.17
Professional Development Program	2.42	1.17

[a]Scale values: not active = 1; slightly active = 2; moderately active = 3; very active = 4.